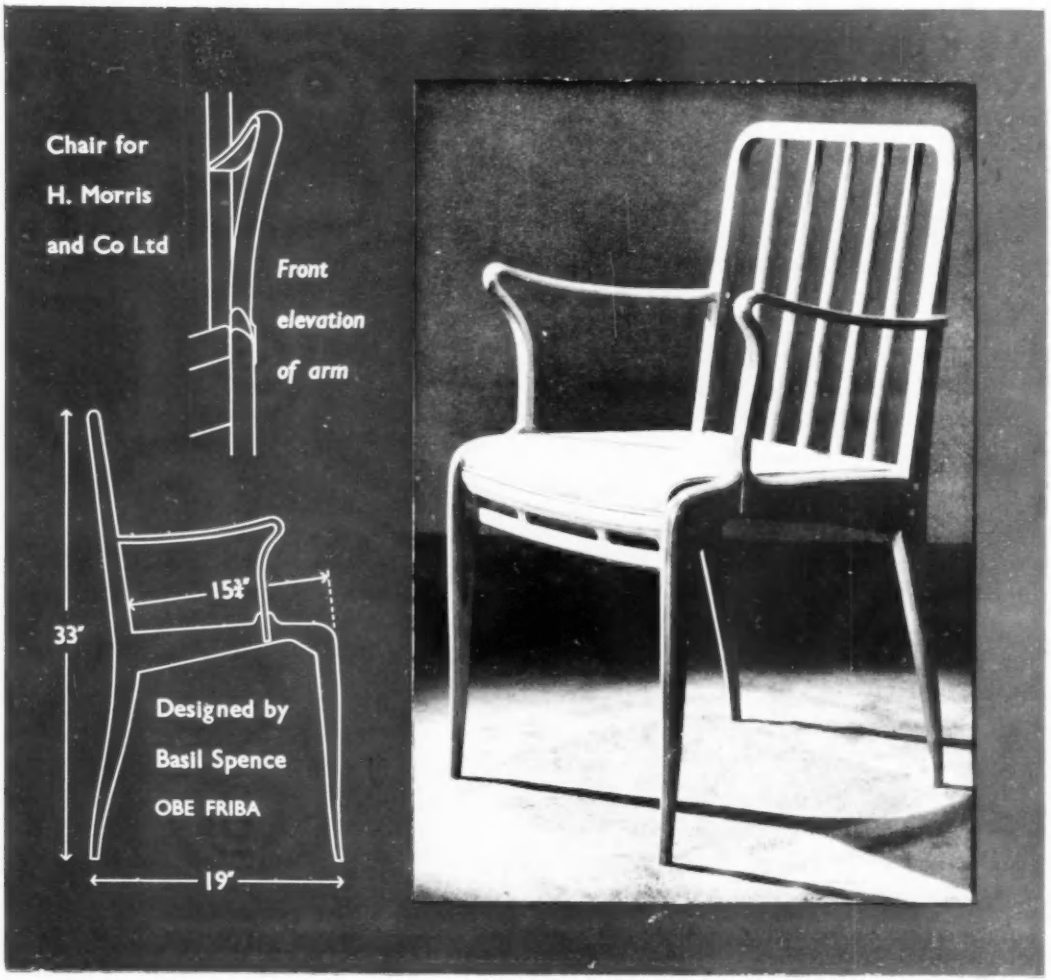
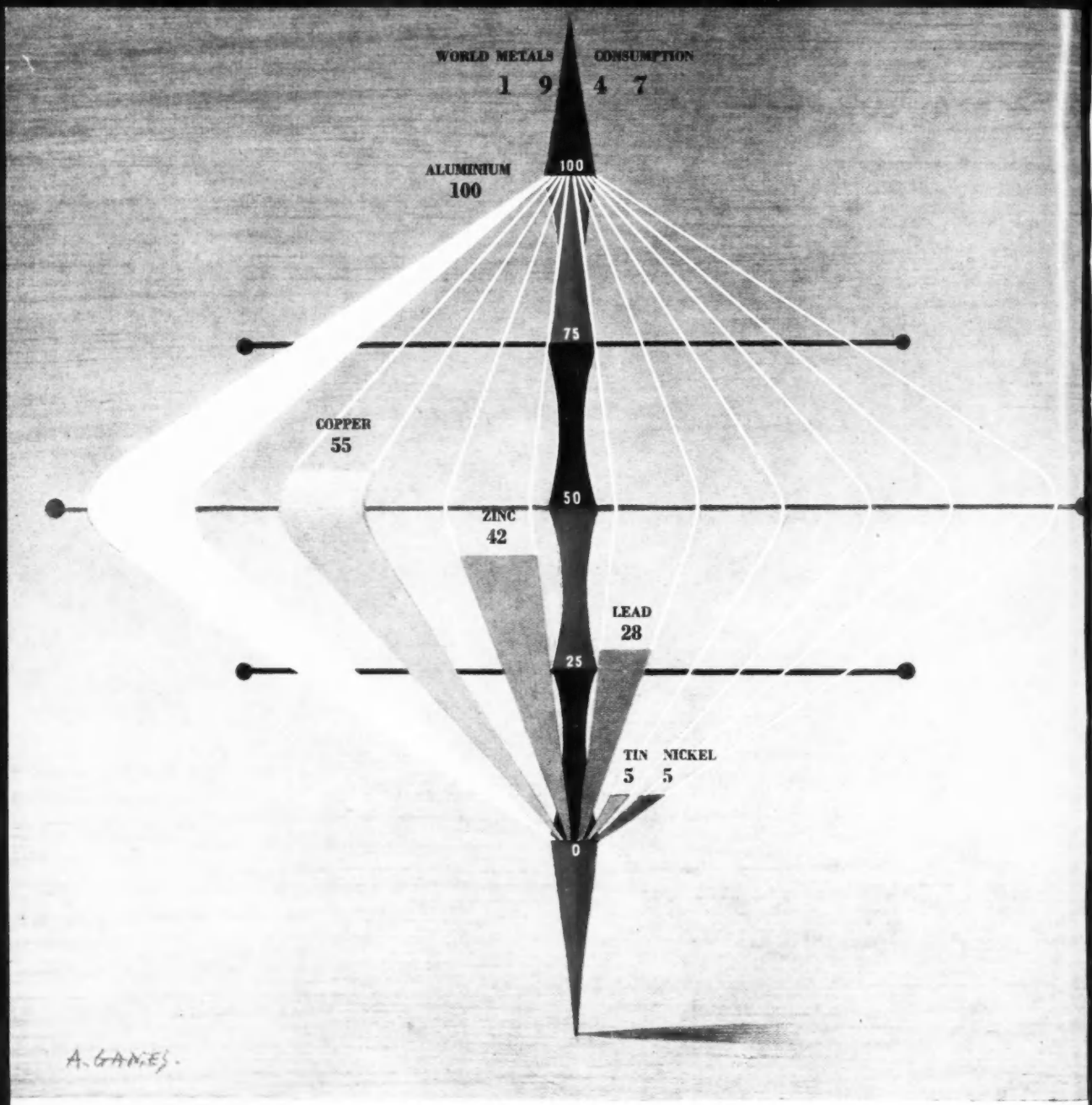
DESIGN

A MONTHLY JOURNAL FOR MANUFACTURERS AND DESIGNERS



NO. 3 · MARCH 1949 · ISSUED BY THE COUNCIL OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN



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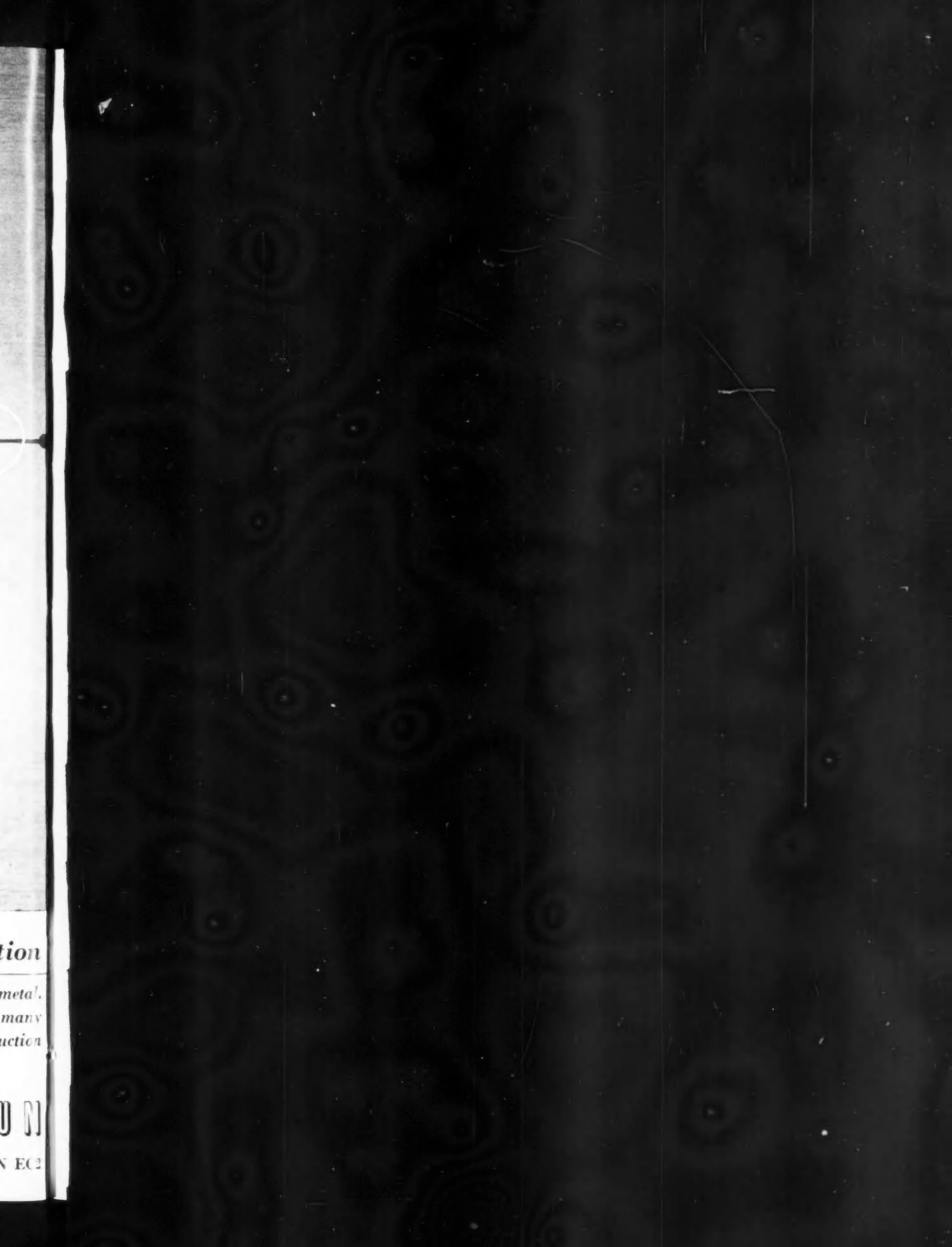

DESIGN

NUMBER THREE · MARCH 1949

A MONTHLY JOURNAL for industry, issued by the Council of Industrial Design and by the Scottish Committee of the Council. *Editor:* ALEC DAVIS

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Technique and design

IN THIS AGE of technicians the gap between technical design and appearance-design must be narrowed if the products of industry are to be good-looking. Too often, technique and style move along parallel lines: it is encouraging to be reminded that they can, and sometimes do, meet. Some examples of their meeting were provided in the Scottish Furniture Competition, reported in this issue. The entries in this contest were not of unique or even exceptional beauty, but they showed several successful attempts to derive good appearance from new methods and materials. The chair illustrated on our front cover owes its lean lithe curves to the imaginative approach of its designer and to its manufacturers' recent experience in laminations for aircraft. . . . In a sideboard made by a new process which aims at high output and low cost, the back, both ends, and part of the front are made in one piece. . . . Cabinetmakers—usually orthodox in their choice of materials—have shown their willingness to use plastic-laminate panels with wood frames.

These are all examples of design based on new technical achievements. Of interest in the same connection is the Redux bonding process: developed during the war, it has since been used in the manufacture of various unwarlike products, but is still not so well known among designers as it might be. It makes possible the bonding of metal to metal or to other non-porous substances and so provides scope for new design.

Taking the broad view

BECAUSE WE RECORD the progress of design in all industries, a manufacturer-reader is unlikely to find, in any one issue of DESIGN, many examples of products from his own industry. At first this may appear a disadvantage, but we do not believe that the saucepan manufacturer is interested only in saucepans, or that the cotton-spinner's horizon is wholly bounded by cotton; on the contrary, if they wish to remain in the forefront of their own industries they must both be aware of design trends in others.

This interdependence of design is discussed in an article starting overleaf. Here we need only emphasise the fact that the "design situation"—the background against which the design of a new product is evolved—has much in common for industries whose products are quite dissimilar. The sample-case for Pilkington glass, in this issue, is not only interesting *as* a sample-case for glass (which concerns very few manufacturers) but as the production of a firm that has its own Design Committee (which is relevant to many). In the same way, the Nebro slide-cabinet—to quote one of several possible examples—is of interest to any firm that considers the commissioning of a consultant designer.

Stock-list selection

THE APPEAL TO industry to submit photographs of its best designed products for the 1951 Stock List of the Council of Industrial Design is meeting with a good response. Already the Stock List bids fair to achieve its main purpose—to form "the most fruitful source of material" for those who will translate into actuality the theme of the 1951 Festival. As an indication of its variety, the photographs on the following pages of DESIGN are all included in the List: 7–10, 13, 16, 17 and 19.

Many trade associations have begun to build up stock lists of their own members' products, for eventual submission to the Council for inclusion in *its* list: a course which we should be happy to see still more widely adopted.

Why the manufacturer must be aware of design trends outside his own industry

INTERDEPENDENCE—OR INBREEDING?

BY ALEC DAVIS

THERE IS IN every age a *spirit of the age* which finds expression not only in its painting and music and literature but in its manufactured products also. This is no academic concept, lacking practical importance: it is something which directly concerns the designer in industry and the industrialist. An awareness of what is going on outside the boundaries of one's own industry is essential to continued success: it is part of the mental stock-in-trade of all who depend on the custom of the public.

An industry that cannot or will not see beyond its bounds must suffer, sooner or later, as a community suffers in which there is excessive inbreeding. Not only its prestige, an incalculable factor, but its profit, a factor that can be calculated in terms of hard cash, will fall. An example of these things happening before one's eyes was evident to any observer of the British costume-jewellery industry in the 1930's. The interdependence of jewellery design and dress design seems, to the outsider, so obvious that one would expect the jewellers to keep always in touch with trends in dress fashion; but in this instance they failed to do so. What happened as a result is recorded in the objective but outspoken phrases of a Working Party report[1]:

> . . . The so-called "fashion" jewellery, originating in Pforzheim in Germany and developed with great success in the neighbourhood of Jablonec in Czecho-Slovakia, . . . captured the market. This type takes its cue from the dress designer and seeks to adapt itself to the changing fashions of dress. . . . The industry in London and Birmingham was in general quite unable to compete with it. . . .

Although that is a conspicuous example of failure to realise the interdependence of design in different industries, it is not the only example that could be cited. Nor would it be right to assume that the fashion industries alone are susceptible: on the contrary, even

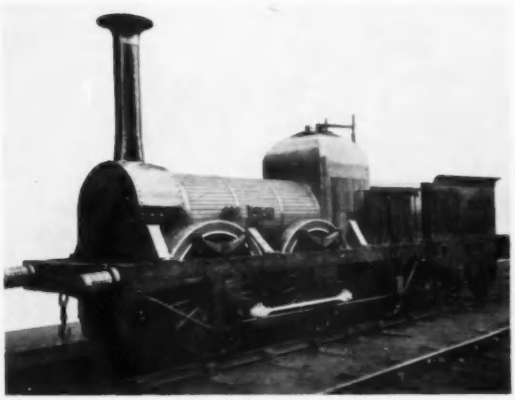
[1] *Working Party Reports: Jewellery and Silverware* (HMSO, 1946).

engineering design is not immune from the effects of changing tastes. In the late eighteenth century—an age whose outlook was dominated by classicism—machines had beams and frames and finials shaped in accordance with the classical orders of architecture; and the difference in appearance between a railway engine or a ship or a printing-press of today and its counterpart of a century ago is not due solely to *technical* progress—it is due also to the engineer-designer's expressing the spirit of his own time.

Many trends in product design begin as trends in architecture—"the mistress art." In the Arts and Crafts Movement at the end of last century, and again in the Bauhaus[2] in the early 1920's, it was the evolution of a new architectural style—itself influenced by the Cubist school of painting—that first made plain the absence of a corresponding contemporary style in furniture, in light-fittings, tableware and domestic equipment generally: and it was under architectural influence that new styles for such products were eventually evolved. Recently, the influence of fine art on decorative industrial art has again been apparent. Abstract art began as a movement in painting and sculpture, but in the last few years it has had a noticeable effect on the design of furniture, carpets, furnishing and dress fabrics; even more conspicuously has it affected such commercial art-forms as exhibition stands, packages, posters and press advertisements.

Industries themselves may also act as a mutual stimulant in design. Shapes or finishes or motifs

Unlike *because they are the products of different ages. The difference in appearance of these two locomotives is not due solely to technical progress*



Like *because they are of the same decade though produced by different industries: Ensign camera and Ingersoll travelling clock of similar shape*

[2] The school of arts and crafts, established in Weimar in 1919, which, under the direction of Walter Gropius, became the first school of *industrial* design—"for more than a decade, a paramount centre of creative energy in Europe . . . at the same time a laboratory for handicraft and for standardisation; a school, and a workshop" (Pevsner, *Pioneers of the Modern Movement*). The *Bauhaus* moved from Weimar to Dessau in 1925; Gropius left it in 1928.

Grate made by the Carron Company

Wine cooler from Kenwood

Chair in beechwood, carved and gilt: 1764
Courtesy Victoria and Albert Museum

The spirit of the age is common to products of all industries, all crafts. Nowhere is this more evident than in diverse products all designed by one man; designs by Robert Adam in the eighteenth century, above, *as well as designs by Keith Murray in the* 1930's, (page 2) *emphasise this point*

evolved by designers for one product may influence (not always for good) the design of another, made by a different branch of industry. The familiar shape of the pocket camera has been successfully adapted and adopted for products as diverse as powder compacts, chocolate boxes and travelling clocks. One can see, also, the influence of furniture design on the design of curtain-materials, and the close relationship between fashions in dress and in handbags, belts and dress accessories. The shapes of early Wedgwood wares "were much influenced by the austere and graceful design of the contemporary silver"[3]: though pottery and silver are the products of two separate industries, they are used side by side on the table, and trends in design which influence either will almost always influence both.

Sometimes designers in one industry gain such a marked lead in the use of certain materials that design in other industries is inevitably influenced by them. During the late war, the use of transparent plastic materials for aircraft gun-turrets and cockpit-covers was developed to such an extent that it has since affected design in very different fields: similar types of material have been used in packages, in display-containers for food and even in guards on machinery.

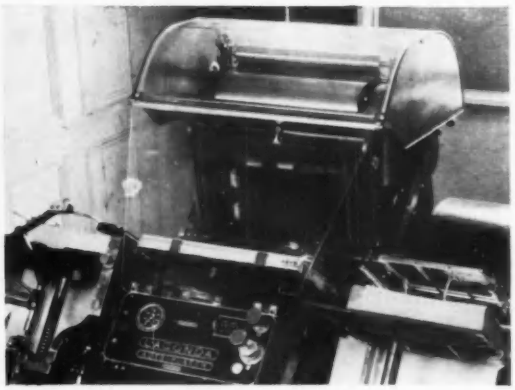
Again, changes in the design of one kind of product sometimes necessitate changes in another for efficiency's sake. The increased popularity of cookers with flat hotplates has stimulated the design of cooking-utensils with correspondingly flat bases that will not buckle or distort, to make the most efficient use of the heat. Progress in aircraft design, resulting in an increase in air travel, has created a demand for lightweight air luggage. High-speed motoring—made possible by developments in the mechanical design of the motor-car—has necessitated a new type of signpost, sited far enough in advance of the road junction to give adequate warning to the driver.

[3] W. B. Honey, *Wedgwood Ware* (Faber, 1948).

Advantage of awareness

This, the critic may say, is all very fine as theory, but has it any practical, commercially valuable, application? One might argue that if these changes happen sooner or later anyway there is nothing to be done about them. That is a dangerous fallacy: a wave does not break simultaneously all along the shore, nor do design trends impinge on the consciousness of every manufacturer at the same instant. He who becomes aware of them first is most likely to be able to take advantage of them in his own business.

One way in which the isolation of individual industries can be broken down is the employment of designers whose outlook is broad because they work for more than one industry. The versatile designer is not, as is sometimes suggested, a new and transient



Designers in the aircraft industry set the pace, during the war years, in intelligent exploitation of the special qualities of transparent plastics—as in the "teardrop" cockpit cover for a Hawker fighter. Designers in other industries have carried on where they left off, evolving a variety of shapes—from "bubble" toothbrush packs for Halex to machine guards on the Lagonda printing press designed by F. J. Clarke

phenomenon: he has, indeed, existed longer than large-scale industry. A classic example is provided by the Adam brothers, who carried their talent for design into many fields. When Robert Adam designed a London house for one of his patrons, he designed also the owner's sedan chair, his door-knocker and his wife's clock-case. "The style of the silversmiths and makers of Sheffield plate was entirely revolutionised by the Adam brothers' designs"[4]; "neither wall-papers, textiles, needlework nor metalwork were regarded as too insignificant for their attention"[5]; there were Adam designs for chairs, carpets, clocks, lamps, window draperies, and—coming nearer to modern industrial production—grates for manufacture by the Carron Company. As Sir John Soane told the Royal Academy, "everything was Adamatic."

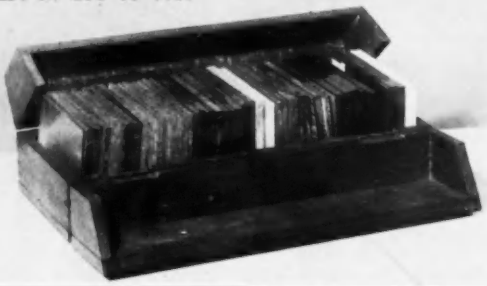
The employment of a designer who works for several industries is not and cannot be the whole answer to the problem of isolationism; but it is not essential to *practise* design in order to be sensitively aware of design trends—indeed, this awareness is one of the manufacturer's responsibilities. (The broad term "manufacturer" must here be interpreted according to individual circumstances to mean managing director, sales or production manager, staff designer, research or development department.) Most manufacturers already keep an eye on their immediate competitors' products, but it is less general practice to watch industries remote from one's own, or architectural schools or art galleries. Indeed it is not easy to do so: in last year's BIF—the most representative display of British industrial production—there were 3,430 exhibitors; the activities of British industry are recorded in 600 trade and technical papers; and in Central London alone there are 37 art-galleries. To keep in touch with their activities in detail is manifestly impossible: yet to have a broad picture is essential. The hope that DESIGN may play some part in outlining it is one of the main reasons for the existence of this journal.

Design is indivisible

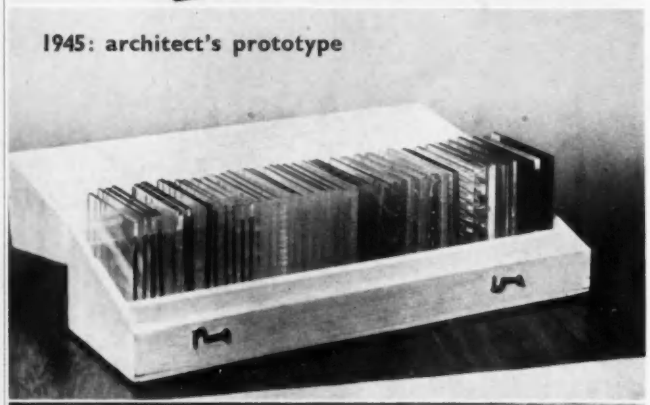
Examples of interrelated design trends are so many and, when brought together, so significant that one is tempted to continue the argument to an inordinate length: but it can be summarised by saying that design in all industries is interdependent because (*a*) the spirit of an age is reflected in the products of the age, no matter what industry produces them; (*b*) materials and methods of production are usually common to a number of industries; (*c*) technical progress in one industry may make designs in ancillary industries out-of-date. In short, Design, like Peace, is indivisible.

[4] James Lees-Milne, *The Age of Adam*. (Batsford, 1947).
[5] Edwin Foley, *The Book of Decorative Furniture*. (T. C. & E. C. Jack, 1911).

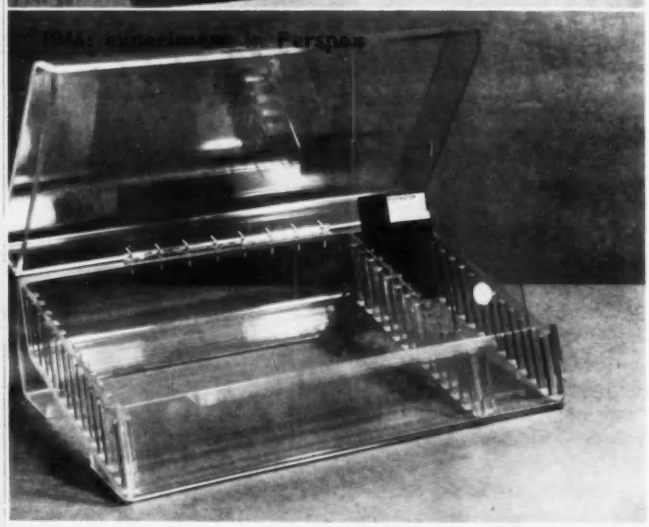
1925: in use to 1939



1945: architect's prototype



1946: experimental Perspex



1949: the new production model

A better box for glass samples

PLASTICS REPLACE WOOD IN LATEST DEVELOPMENT

FOR MANY YEARS Pilkington Bros Ltd have made up sample sets of the various kinds of glass which they manufacture: these they send to architects for their reference files. The samples are in the form of 3 in. × 4 in. glass rectangles. From 1920 until the outbreak of war in 1939, Pilkingtons used to send them out in plain wooden boxes; they stood on edge, in mass, without partitions to separate them. Although the size was increased to accommodate a growing range, the basic design of the box remained unchanged.

A similar container was introduced again at the end of the war, as a temporary measure; but meanwhile the firm's Design Committee had formulated these desiderata for a better box:

(*a*) Each sample must be separately supported for easy withdrawal and replacement; and it should not, when replaced, interfere with the closing of the lid.

(*b*) Sets of similar samples must be grouped together, and at the same time it must be possible to locate any individual sample at a glance.

(*c*) A contents list must be introduced.

(*d*) There must be some space left for the addition of new patterns.

To meet these needs, several prototype boxes were produced during 1945–6. Two, made in wood, were designed by Pilkingtons' own technicians, and one by an architect, Mr Derek Bridgwater, B Arch, FRIBA. A further experimental design, fabricated in Perspex by Ashdowns Ltd, showed the possibilities of plastics, and it was decided that they should be adopted for future use. It was considered, however, that moulding "would be more economical and satisfactory" than fabrication, and the latest type of sample case, which has been in use since January 1949, has its base moulded in phenol and its lid in urea formaldehyde. The colour-scheme of the new box is black and white; besides the black base there are two black nameplates, with raised lettering, on the lid. The cut-away portions in the ends of the box, shaped for ease of carrying, provide further evidence of a commonsense approach to design.

Another plastic cabinet, also intended to hold sheets of glass, though for a different purpose, is described on p. 15.

Back, sides and part of the front of this sideboard are shaped in one shell of laminated plywood (the technique used in Day and Latimer's prize-winning entry in the Museum of Modern Art competition). Machine-made by Matthew Spears & Co Ltd, designed by James Henderson

New techniques, new design

Scottish Furniture Competition reviewed by Wyndham Goodden

BEFORE COMMENTING ON any of the winning entries from the Competition which the Scottish Committee of the Council organised on behalf of the Scottish Furniture Manufacturers' Association, it might be as well to outline the scope and method of the Competition itself. Broadly speaking, its objects were to give the industry a chance to show what it could do under absolutely free conditions; to discover what trends were likely to develop with the gradual easing of controls and specifications; and to set the industry thinking in terms of its contribution to the 1951 Festival.

The Board of Trade co-operated generously by granting licences for all the timber required: and almost the only regulating condition which the Scottish Committee laid down—in order to keep the furniture approximately to the same scale—was the sizes of rooms for which it was to be designed. Manufacturers were asked to submit under two classes only: (*a*) furniture for complete rooms, (*b*) occasional pieces; but at the judges' discretion single pieces from (*a*) were eligible for awards in (*b*) so that the rejection of an entire room did not prejudice the salvation of a particularly successful piece within it.

The Competition was judged by an independent panel of distinguished designers and retailers, in equal numbers, under the chairmanship of Brian O'Rorke. Distinguishing marks on entries were a disqualification, and anonymity was preserved until *after* a meeting between judges and competitors. This meeting was really the essence of the whole competition. It was felt that too often in the past, both in competitions and in selective exhibitions, competitors had had their submissions rejected and returned without any clear guidance as to why they had failed. To remedy this, the judges not only attached their criticisms to every single entry but agreed to meet the whole industry in the presence of

THE SCOTTISH FURNITURE COMPETITION: WYNDHAM

the furniture, to explain the principles on which they had judged, and personally be targets for question or complaint resulting from their findings. As the anonymity of manufacturers relative to their entries had been preserved, this barrage could be answered without embarrassment.

Generally to assess the results of the Competition is difficult, since manufacturers had widely different aims. Some deliberately limited themselves to existing controls, others did not. An important minority used new materials and new techniques. It would have been improper to judge hand-made furniture against machine-made, or entries intended for lower-income groups against those which gave themselves no price restriction. Consequently judging was in no way competitive. Each entry was assessed on its own merits, and against the standard of what was possible within the target aimed at. First-class diplomas were reserved for entries which, in the opinion of the judges, could hold their own in any competition in the world at the present time. These were awarded to only 7 per cent of the total entries, and second-class diplomas to a further 11 per cent.

More elegance, a more subdued and charming use of contrasting materials, a sweeter line, clearer appreciation of the function of furniture in a contemporary room, and greater attention to detail—these were the trends that noticeably emerged and were most clearly seen in the work of Basil Spence, Connel Pringle, Robert Goodden, R. D. Russell and Hugh Martin.

The winning entries are on view to the public in the Scottish Committee's stand at the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow, from 16 March to 9 April.

Dining table and chair (the latter illustrated also on DESIGN's front cover). Immensely strong owing to the laminated construction, yet pared to the fineness of chicken-bones. Decoration within the form is obtained from the striations of laminated mahogany and Canadian betula. Designed by Basil Spence for H. Morris & Co Ltd, who, in the construction of this furniture, used some of the knowledge gained from recent experience in manufacturing laminated rotor blades for the Cierva helicopter (DESIGN, January p. 22)

Extreme left: Multi-purpose nursery cupboard by H. & A. G. Alexander & Co Ltd; designed by Neville Ward and Frank Austin and decorated by Enid Marx. Grey-white Formica panels, decorated in yellow, red and blue, are set in birch frames. Satin brass handles. The furniture builds-up on the unit principle. Heat- and moisture-proof

Left: Chest in African mahogany and English elm, from a bedroom suite designed by Robert Goodden and R. D. Russell for the Scottish Co-operative Wholesale Society Ltd. Beautiful detailing of handles and great distinction in material. The wardrobes of this suite are extensible and reversible

Right: This sideboard, not a million miles from Utility but possessing distinction and charm of colour, might be said to be a justification and fulfilment of the Board of Trade's Utility policy. In bird's eye maple and zebrano, by Fisher, Gillis & Co Ltd; designer, Hugh Martin

OODDEN'S COMMENTARY *CONTINUED*

Designed by Connel Pringle for Whytock & Reid

Modified *rognon* (=kidney) dressing table in Honduras mahogany, part of a wholly hand-made suite. This piece achieves the highest Scottish standard of craftmanship in construction, detail and finish

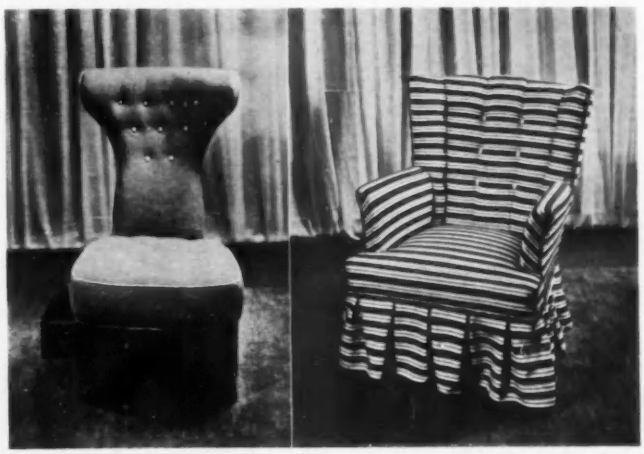
Right: Armless knitting chair by James Justice & Sons Ltd, designed by Charles Addison to give support for back and ease for working. Drawer for work-material swings out of Scottish walnut base. To meet consumer requirements notified to the Council of Industrial Design in correspondence and at Housewives' Forums

Extreme right: Fireside chair by N. H. & E. Caplan Ltd, upholstered in specially designed hand-woven material, striped white and wine-colour. Designer, Montague A. Caplan

JUDGES: *Designers:* Brian O'Rorke, ARI, FRIBA, FSIA (chairman); David Booth, FRIBA, FSIA; Ernest Race, FSIA. *Retailers:* Geoffrey Dunn, H. G. Dunn & Sons Ltd, Bromley; Crofton E. Gane, P. E. Gane Ltd, Bristol; Ernest Taylor, Ray & Miles Ltd, Liverpool

ILLUSTRATIONS: The knitting chair *below* was awarded a second-class diploma: all other furniture on pp 7–9, first-class diplomas

THE AUTHOR of this commentary and accompanying captions, Wyndham Goodden, is Chief Officer of the Scottish Committee of the Council of Industrial Design.



Furniture for a Design Centre

THE DISTINCTIVE STYLE of furniture and furnishings makes a definite contribution to the stimulating atmosphere of the new Rayon Design Centre in Mayfair. Most of the furniture, including all the pieces illustrated here, has been designed by Mr J. Dennis Lennon, MC, ARIBA, Director of the Centre.

The woods chiefly used in its construction are mahogany (for frames) and sycamore (for panels). The Formica top of the desk, *left*, matches the light colour of the sycamore and is proof against stains from spilt ink and burns from cigarette-ends.

All the upholstered furniture in the Centre is covered in rayon. Each piece is therefore a showpiece for the material, and the designer has made it easy for covers to be changed so that new rayon fabrics can frequently be shown: the armchair, *below*, is made in such a way that the upholstered portion can be detached for re-covering by the removal of wooden pegs, without interfering with the structure.

The furniture designed by Mr Lennon is supplemented in the Design Centre by pieces from the Ernest Race range; all supplied by Dunn's of Bromley.

British design through Brazilian eyes . . .

An importer looks at British goods and notes a tendency to conservatism

These notes are not a survey based on market research, objective as good research must be: they are the views of one man—a man with an interest in design and experience in the import of many commodities into Brazil.

BY GIVING MORE attention to the market's preferences in design, British manufacturers could expand their trade with Brazil. This at least is the opinion of Mr D. G. Coimbra, exporters' agent, who recently made an extensive buying tour of British and continental manufacturing centres.

Today, Brazil manufactures something like eighty per cent of the goods she requires but it is in the twenty per cent that she buys from overseas that design is most important. There are two reasons for its importance in this field: first, the imported goods are those which sell on quality (and that includes quality of design) rather than price. Second, there would be no demand for them at all unless they were different in style from the products of Brazil's own industries, which, being on the spot, inevitably have an economic advantage over competitors.

The importance of the Brazilian market is well realised in the United States. At the time of writing, Sears Roebuck, the great Chicago retailers, are on the point of opening two department stores in Brazil at a cost of five million dollars. This strong competition will inevitably stimulate activity among Brazilian retailers and force them to modernise their methods of merchandising. The lion's share of Brazil's imports come from the United States—about four times as much as from Britain, among the types of merchandise with which Mr Coimbra is chiefly concerned—but there is scope for expansion of British exports, especially in view of the present shortage of US dollars.

Labels should stress British origin

"Made in Britain," says Mr Coimbra, is a phrase which discriminating Brazilian buyers are proud to see on their purchases. It suggests quality and customers are willing to pay a little more ("or much more") for it. But a note of criticism enters here: too many goods which *are* made in Britain fail to make the fact evident. Labels indicating British origin are not as widely used as they should be, and again, among the minority which are adequate in denoting British origin, many are unsatisfactory in appearance, detracting from the saleability of the article to which they are attached, whereas they could equally well enhance it.

Modern architecture in Brazil's chief cities provides the right setting for modern products: the demand is for goods of contemporary design rather than reproductions. Above is seen a typical business quarter of Rio de Janeiro, with new office blocks flanking a broad street

While Mr Coimbra confirms the view that bright colours and large patterns are in general popular in South America, he points out that there are exceptions. Quite apart from the fact that a preference of this fundamental nature is from time to time affected by changes in fashion, there are some types of merchandise to which it does not apply at any time. In men's shirts and shirt material, for example, a small neat stripe is favoured and large patterns are almost unsaleable.

Although it is possible to generalise up to a point about Brazilian taste—even about South American taste—yet it must not be overlooked that there are differences in different parts of the country. Brazil's two main shopping centres are Rio de Janeiro (the

capital) and São Paulo, and their tastes are different, just as, say, Bournemouth's and Edinburgh's are different. Rio is a sunny city, bright colours and gay patterns sell well there; São Paulo has a somewhat heavier rainfall and a rather misty atmosphere: there the demand is for quieter colours and smaller patterns.

Many of the new buildings in Brazil, in the cities especially, provide a magnificent modern architectural background and it is scarcely surprising that many Brazilians consider the appearance-design of British goods as a whole to be rather old-fashioned. A paper-cutting guillotine, solid and reliable and made by a reputable old-established British firm, is now said to be unsaleable in Brazil, simply because it *looks* old-fashioned. This is not exceptional but typical of a wide range of engineering products and equipment, laboratory instruments and smaller things like fountain pens as well as the products of the "fashion industries" in the usual meaning of the term. The following are Mr Coimbra's comments on some of these, based on 26 years' business experience in Rio —experience with products that range from printing machinery to piece-goods, sports equipment to men's wear:

Raincoats should be waterproof but unrubberised. Colours, light tan or beige. Half or quarter lining.

Overcoats: The American *Alpacuna* has a good market in Brazil, "entirely due to superb design." Brazilian customers are willing to pay for this kind of style.

Suits: There is a big business in light-weight woollens from Britain; trousers with zip fasteners are popular.

Men's shoes: Brown outsell black by 5 to 1.

As an outstanding but too rare example of a British label that is right in the information it gives and in its style, Mr Coimbra instances the two-colour printed silk label used on Kynoch scarves. A Brazilian shopper, he suggests, would pay five shillings more for a scarf bearing that label than for the same scarf without it.

Socks: Short socks are preferred to the 14-inch length. Plaids, checks or horizontal stripes generally preferred to solid colours.

Sweaters: The most popular size in Brazil is probably one size smaller than in England.

Men's Shirts should be short and have a pocket on the chest (sports shirts, two pockets). The collar-attached pattern is required. Shirts with separate collars have not sold in Brazil since 1929: even formal dress shirts today have attached collars.

Men's underwear: Silk has lost ground to cotton. Woven cotton shorts with three snap buttons—easily adjustable—are outselling those with ordinary buttons. V-shaped knitted cotton shorts with elastic waistbands are popular.

Ties: American ties, with their larger patterns and brighter colours, are gaining popularity at the expense of British designs. Even in the "monkey and parrot" style of design there is a difference between good and bad—a fact which has been made plain by certain Brazilian manufacturers' unsuccessful attempts to imitate American ties.

Pyjamas: The market here is very small. Pyjama trousers with elastic belt and snap buttons instead of the usual cord girdle, imported from the USA, have met with some success.

Handkerchiefs: British makers are said to be losing sales because of the "dullness" of their designs. Coloured borders are favoured, but wide hemstitching is not. Rolled edges are preferred.

Sheets: Colours are unpopular; white is preferred. Saleability depends largely on packaging and labelling.

Blankets: The Brazilian product is expensive. There is a market for British blankets provided (*a*) they are coloured, not white; (*b*) they have a wide satin binding with "a nice stitch"; and (*c*) they are attractively packaged. Double-bed sizes outsell single-bed sizes by 5 to 1.

Spectacles from Britain do not sell because the frames are too small. Spectacles are now "a fashion article for men as well as women."

Travel goods: The best selling pieces of luggage are those with canvas covers treated with waterproof plastic. This applies even to upright travelling wardrobe trunks, 42 or 45 inches high.

A Coimbra comment, which many British salesmen will endorse, is the desirability of including a few conspicuously new and distinctive designs in any range of fashion goods. They will not necessarily sell themselves but they will arouse the buyer's curiosity and may help to effect a sale of other, more ordinary, items.

QUESTIONS . . . AND SOME ANSWERS

Alternative features in design of an electric cooker

BEFORE THE WAR some 200,000 electric cookers were made in Britain every year, and by 1940 the number installed had reached one and a half million. New demand and replacement demand together make a worthwhile home market for the newcomer whose product can stand up to competition from a number of large and well established manufacturers. There is also, of course, the export market to be considered, and today it must be considered *first*. Not only is the general need for increased exports as urgent in the electric-cooker industry as in any other, but this industry has its own particular reason for developing export trade—that is, the inadequacy of electricity supplies at home both now and in the predictable future. As long ago as 1945 the PEP report on *The Market for Household Appliances* forecast that after the war "installed electric cooker capacity [might] be to some extent limited by generating capacity," and the truth of that prophecy has been made plain by recent power cuts.

Under these conditions, any aggressive attempt to increase sales of electric cookers in the home market (except for new houses, in many of which they are installed) might prove unprofitable and would almost certainly provoke criticism. The designer must plan any new model with the requirements of overseas as well as home markets clearly in mind.

Such is the marketing background to the introduction of a new cooker by Parnall (Yate) Ltd—already the manufacturers of a successful domestic wringer of original design, and remembered among people with longer memories as the successors of an old-established aircraft-manufacturing concern. The cooker has been designed by Stanley F. Bickell, MIEE, now Parnall's chief engineer. Many years of experience in this field have given Mr Bickell a full awareness of the problems involved: he knows the conventional answers to cooker-design problems, though, where unconventional solutions seem best, he has not been afraid to adopt them in the new Parnall design.

A basic decision that must be made by the designer of any electric cooker is whether *economy in heating the oven to cooking temperature* is more or less important than *economy in keeping it hot* once that temperature has been reached. To say that the two economies cannot be achieved in the same cooker is to oversimplify the position, and it is also drastic simplification to say that, whereas most makers choose economy in staying hot, Parnall's have chosen economy in heating-up: but neither statement is wholly inaccurate. Because the lagging of the Parnall oven is reduced to a selected low value, it heats up more quickly than some other types of cooker, but for the same reason it loses more heat during cooking. The result, the makers claim, is a saving in current consumption where cooking-time is two hours or less, and an increase of about five per cent in the minority of cases where it is more. Thanks to ingenuity of design, the heat lost from the oven is not wasted, because heated air is led into a space between the

oven wall and the outer wall of the cooker, and thence by louvres into a hot-cupboard immediately above it. Of the other design problems involved, and the solutions chosen, these are some of the most interesting:

1. *Should the cooker stand on a plinth or on legs?*

In a modern kitchen with built-in sink and cupboard units, the plinth base is preferable; but by no means all the houses in which electric cookers are likely to be installed have this kind of kitchen. The solution chosen was a compromise—to offer legs *or* plinths, and to make the two interchangeable: with a further choice between a plinth having a plain front and one containing a deep drawer. The legs are of tubular skid form, which makes it easy for the cooker to be pulled out from the wall, and they are adjustable in height so that an uneven floor no longer means a wobbling stove. (This device, incidentally, is one of seven features in the Parnall cooker for which the protection of a patent or registered design has been sought.)

2. *Should the oven door be hinged at side or at base?*

There is admittedly some demand for a door which lets down to form a shelf, but this was considered misguided for several reasons. First, if a door *can* be used as a shelf, it *will* be—and a lot of oven heat will be lost in this way, for the sake of a little added convenience. Second, a drop door wastes precious space and may even be dangerous in a small kitchen, and it makes the inside of the oven less accessible for cleaning. From a production viewpoint, the drop door must prove more costly because it requires more robust stops and hingeing than the side-hinged door. Because of these considerations—unrealised by the housewife, but very definitely the concern of the designer—the more orthodox side-hinged door has been employed.

3. *Materials and methods of construction.*

The Victorians made heavy cooking stoves of cast-iron. Some contemporary American manufacturers use all-sheet-metal construction for lightness. Neither would be acceptable in Britain today: the usual British compromise is to employ a cast-iron skeleton with sheet-metal panelling. Parnall's have gone one stage further in the direction of lightness, retaining this type of construction but using cast aluminium instead of cast iron for the framework, so that it is light in weight and rustproof.

For panels, they offer vitreous-enamelled steel to those customers who want it, but they also offer 16 s.w.g. aluminium, to which a synthetic enamel is bonded. This saves fourteen pounds' weight, besides the saving effected by the use of an aluminium framework.

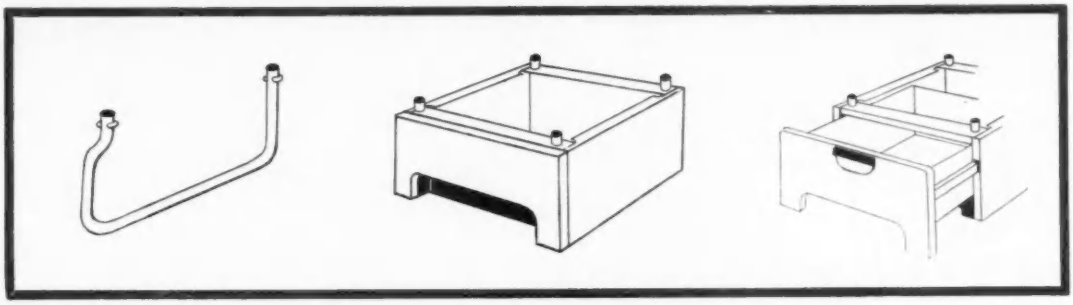
The hob also is made in two alternative materials—vitreous enamelled steel and cast aluminium. Aluminium is the designer's and makers' choice: it has proved practical after two years' service tests and, surface-lustred, it has no need of enamel or plating. These finishes are widely employed for steel hobs, but neither of them is completely invulnerable.

The appearance of the cooker may well be considered one of its merits, and the designer's comments err on the side of modesty: "All post-war designs of electric cookers have conformed to plain cabinet lines, and if we . . . have achieved a neat and clean exterior, there is no novelty in it." Novelty is a doubtful blessing, anyway.

Other features of design interest in the Parnall cooker are:

> an annular space around the hob which prevents it from becoming excessively hot, enables it to be easily removed for washing, and forms a trap to prevent liquid from running down the sides of the cooker if a pan boils over;
>
> housings for the heating elements which are shaped to form runners for the oven shelves, and so make separate shelf brackets unnecessary;
>
> boiling plates and grill boilers that conform to the British Electrical Development Association's interchangeability specification. In the past, so much public criticism of electrical equipment has been directed against lack of standardisation—and justifiably so—that the present trend to standardise various dimensions and performance standards should have considerable selling value.

It is early yet to assess any trends in customers' choices between the various alternatives offered to



Legs or plinth? *The Parnall cooker design embodies three variants—legs in the form of tubular skids* (left), *a plain plinth* (centre: also seen in the cooker on p. 13), *or a plinth incorporating a deep drawer* (right)

them, but present indications suggest that plinths are generally preferred to the tubular legs and that vitreous-enamelled steel is more popular than synthetic-enamelled aluminium for panels. For the hob, lustred aluminium and enamelled steel are in almost equal demand: electricity supply undertakings who buy cookers for hire favour aluminium for this component.

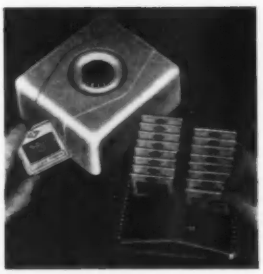
To date, Australia, South Africa and Eire have proved the best overseas markets for the Parnall cooker, with Australia well ahead of the other countries. Abroad, as at home, white vitreous enamel is favoured for its high gloss and clean appearance.

The policy of offering alternative materials and alternative designs for certain components is interesting. It must to some extent complicate problems of manufacture and distribution, but it enables a manufacturer to launch new developments without incurring the threat of Carey Street that hangs over pioneers who carry their single-mindedness too far. For this reason Parnall's policy is worth consideration by other manufacturers who realise the need for improvements in design but realise also that some of their customers, having preconceived ideas of their own, may not be ready to accept them.

NEW DESIGN TO MEET A NEW NEED

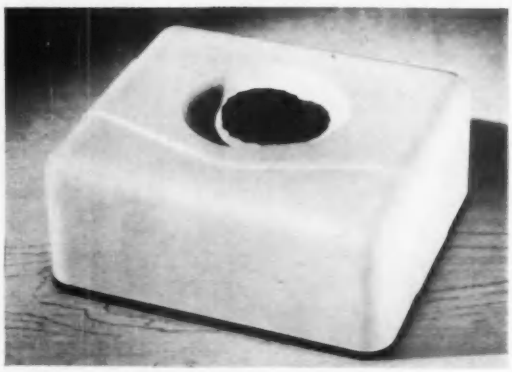
DESIGNING A SHOP for one photographic firm led recently to a commission to design a product for another. The shop was a London retailer's; the product, illustrated here, was a slide cabinet for Neville Brown & Co Ltd, also of London. The consultant designer responsible for both jobs was W. M. de Majo, with P. Harvey as assistant designer of the cabinet. Retailing at 27*s* 6*d*, it will house either 2 in. × 2 in. lantern slides or miniature-camera colour transparencies in their usual type of holder. Its 50 spaces are numbered (with raised black figures against a white background), and inside the lid an index is mounted.

The material used for the base is black Bakelite; for the lid alternatives are offered—red or white urea or, again, black Bakelite. Experience has shown that photographic products generally sell better in black than in bright colours (perhaps because of the optical-instrument associations of black) and evidence of the relative popularity of the three lid colours will be awaited with interest.



A slide cabinet

for miniature-camera colour transparencies. The lid is dished, and the knob (forming head of screw which holds lid and base together) does not project



GREEN LINE EXPERIMENT

Controlled heating, fluorescent lighting, and more space between seats in double-deck coach on London bus chassis

THE EXPERIMENTAL Green Line double-deck coach maintains the high standard of design we have come to expect from London Transport. Many new features have been incorporated and the striking appearance of the coach is the culmination of 18 months' work by London Transport's development section at Chiswick and the consulting industrial designers, Norbert Dutton and Douglas Scott.

The vehicle is of normal 7 ft. 6 in. body width and uses, in modified form, the standard AEC *Regent* Mk III chassis. A major innovation is the removal of the radiator to a position under the stairs. This has affected the frontal appearance of the coach and explains the presence—which might be criticised on purely aesthetic grounds—of a broad grill providing an air inlet for the oil cooler and filter.

The exterior paintwork is slightly darker than the normal Green Line colour, broken by a continuous horizontal band of light green at intermediate floor level, outlined with bronze-finished mouldings. Several experimental route-boards were tried, including the light green board seen on the facing page, but the final choice was dark green with the standard Johnston lettering in bronze outlined in black. Indicator blinds are lettered in amber on a green background.

Windows open to half their depth, and are opened and closed by mechanical winding. Pneumatically-operated double-leaf sliding doors enclose the loading platform.

Additional comfort is achieved by seating 46 passengers, as against the 56 carried in a town-service bus of the same dimensions. The driver's cab is larger than usual, and there is a tip-up seat for the conductor at the rear of the lower deck.

Lower panels of the interior are covered in dark green Rexine with a slight grain and semi-matt finish. Window surrounds are stove-enamelled cream with a crackle finish. Redesigned intermediate window-pillars are covered in anodised aluminium, semi-matt. The roof is cream. The floor is covered throughout with mottled green rubber sheeting, and the flywheel cowl which usually protrudes at the front end of the lower deck has been replaced by a ramp extending to the full width of the body and forming a foot-rest for passengers in the front seats. Elsewhere footrests are incorporated in each seat-frame for the use of passengers in the seat immediately behind.

Fluorescent lighting has been used as an experiment. It consists of two parallel strips of lighting in each saloon, each tube being housed in a Perspex container behind which are concealed the choke and starting equipment. Complete absence of luggage racks improves the appearance of the interior, though it may be criticised from the standpoint of convenience as all cases must now be stowed under the seats.

The new heating and ventilating system has been patented by London Transport. An electric fan draws fresh air from the front of the coach through ducts in the roof above the bonnet, blows it through the radiator and then through small grids near the floor of the saloon for heating. In summer, the same fan draws air out of the vehicle, forcing it through the radiator, from which it is discharged below and behind the vehicle. The changeover from heating to cooling is effected by the movement of a lever mounted under the stairs. Maximum air temperature is thermostatically controlled.

Spacious appearance of the lower deck is enhanced by the use of specially shaped handrails on seat-backs instead of vertical rails, strip-lighting, and large windows

INDICATOR WITH FLUORESCENT LIGHTING

"GREEN LINE" IN AMBER-TINTED PERSPEX LETTERS

AIR INTAKE FOR OIL COOKER AND FILTER

LIGHT GREEN BAND BETWEEN BRONZED MOULDINGS

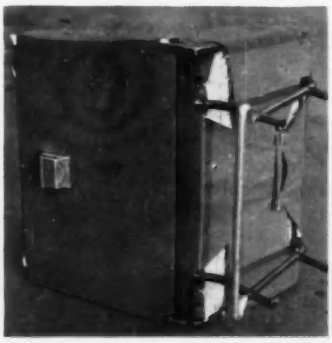
LARGE WINDOWS WITHOUT HORIZONTAL CENTRE BARS

SEATING CAPACITY: 26 ABOVE 20 BELOW

CHASSIS IS BASICALLY THE SAME AS LONDON BUSES

POWER OPERATED SLIDING DOORS

Elastic cord attached to frames of steel tubing supports both seats and squabs



The Dunlopillo seat cushions have easily detachable covers to aid cleaning

The new seat, back-tilted six degrees more than usual, has individual cushions

OUTSIZE
but not out of style

DIFFICULTIES OF THE young outsize woman in obtaining youthful yet smart, slimming styles have for long been overlooked by designers who seem to assume that all outsize women are middle-aged at least. To meet their special needs, Louis J. Mintz Ltd are now designing day and evening dresses and coats—at Utility prices—for women of all ages with hip sizes from 42 in. to 60 in. Many of the fabrics from which they are made are specially designed to suit a particular age-group. For the garment illustrated here, for example, the fabric was designed by Mr Louis Mintz to provide a youthful summer day-dress equally suitable for beach or office wear. The dress was designed by Miss M. Sachs, one of the firm's staff designers, and is made in Mintz' registered *Koolie Kotton*. It is produced in four different hip-sizes from 42 in. upwards at 2-in. intervals. Retail price of this dress and many others in the same range is 49*s* 6*d*.

Lightweight helmets for firemen

EXPERIMENTAL HELMETS MADE of woven glass fabric, resin-impregnated, are now being tried out by firemen during fires. They are lighter and more comfortable—and smarter—than the conventional helmet of leather or cork, which can be easily penetrated by sharp objects, is unsatisfactory when in contact with high-voltage current and is complicated to manufacture. They are considerably lighter than the older types of helmet made of brass or steel.

Ideally a helmet must be capable of protecting the fireman from falling debris and must throw both debris and water clear of his face and neck, without obscuring his vision. It must be resistant to heat, flames and electric currents of at least 10,000 volts, when either wet or dry. It must also be comfortable, firm, light, well-ventilated and as cool inside as possible. Moreover the helmet must *look* tough and strong in order to gain the fireman's confidence.

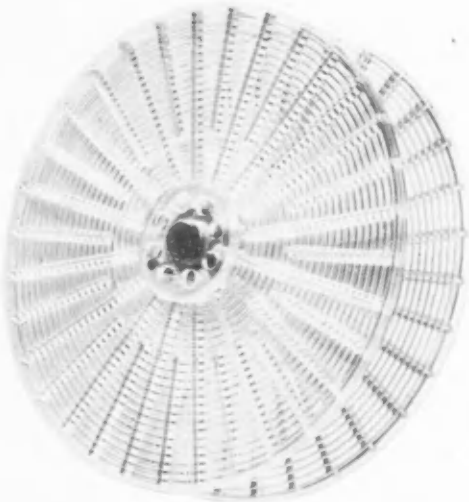
The new plastic helmet has been put through rigorous laboratory tests and has been found to possess all these properties. If it proves as successful in use at fires, it will be generally recommended.

A new feature is a patented form of resilient lining which takes part of the impact from any falling weight and improves the electrical resistance of the helmet.

The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research and the Fire Offices Committee Joint Fire Research Organisation were jointly concerned in developing the helmet.

Ingenuity and a sense of style

SPIRAL DRYER FOR MINIATURE-CAMERA FILM



The spiral spool (right)*—as transparent as two webs of man-made gossamer—is made of Distrene. Below, it can be seen in position in the mouth of the Kodak spiral film dryer*

A SPIRAL SPOOL made of Distrene plastic (polystyrene) is one of the most interesting components of a processing and drying outfit for 35 mm film, designed and made by Kodak Ltd. By means of an ingenious loading device, film is automatically threaded on to the spool, the inner surfaces of which are spirally grooved so that adjacent coils of film cannot touch each other.

The outfit provides a convenient way of processing film in lengths up to 24 ft. The dryer, to which the spool is transferred for the final operation, is compact and clean-looking, finished in cream enamel. Its aluminium casing contains an electric motor, fan and heater. When they are switched on, a current of warm air is blown through the rotating film and moisture is flung off by centrifugal action (to be absorbed by material attached to the inside of the dryer). Approximate drying time is only 30 minutes.

Height of the dryer is 9½ in. and diameter 11½ in. It is primarily intended for the trade; its selling price of £17 10s puts it beyond the reach of all but the most enthusiastic amateurs.

Distinctive shape, *cream enamel finish and a well lettered name-plate make this film dryer visually interesting to layman as well as expert*

LETTERS

In DESIGN we aim to give a hearing to all points of view. This page will be a forum for all who have something to say about design

Provincial art schools and "the geranium-leaf business"

SIR: Reviewing the book, *Pattern and Design*, in your January issue, Mr Jesse Collins stated that the author is "appalled, and rightly, by the usual provincial art-school approach to design; the dead copying of forms from often not-too-good sources, the geranium leaf repeating itself *ad nauseam* along a faded border."

I too am appalled, not only by the grammar, but by the manifest inaccuracy of this statement. Surely it is time that responsible critics gained first-hand knowledge of the provincial art schools before generalising in this irresponsible manner. They would then realise that it is as necessary for these schools to reach a high standard of design as it is for the London schools; their students are no less successful in the recognised examinations.

A statement such as this might have been made with some degree of accuracy before the 1914–18 war and it is quite possible that Mr Collins—or his father—was an art student in those days and is relying on his memory.

Let Mr Collins cite only one school where such "copying from none-too-good sources," together with the geranium-leaf business, takes place, and I shall be prepared to eat my words.

W. J. KAPE
Headmaster
Halifax School of Art

• On this letter, Mr Jesse Collins comments: "I willingly withdraw the word 'provincial,' which should not have been used without qualification. We all know enlightened teaching centres in the provinces, and senior London art schools are largely dependent on these for their students.

"That all is well with design training throughout the country, however, is certainly an optimistic suggestion. How on earth does one account for the deplorable state of design in so many industries?"

That electric candlestick

SIR: As a designer and manufacturer of ornamental iron work my criticism is as follows on your number one edition:—

The wrought iron table lamp illustrated by you is a very poor example of wrought iron as it is treated today. I should have thought that you would have taken the trouble to get an up-to-date example for your issue. The table lamp in question was originally cribbed from shoemakers candlestick and was meant only for a candle. . . .

JACK SCHRIER
Director
Jack Schrier Ltd

London NW1

• The electric candlestick (DESIGN, January, p. 3) was illustrated as an example of bad design—*not* as an example of wrought iron work. We are of course aware that good as well as bad work is being done in this craft today.—EDITOR.

Engineering bias?

SIR: . . . I am pleased to know that you intend to give textiles a measure of consideration, for you will probably appreciate that if the publication is too "bitty" and covers too many trades it will not be as impressive as it could be.

J. FISHWICK
Managing Director
Haslams Ltd

Manchester

SIR: On looking at DESIGN the first impression one gets is that of a background which is mainly technical or perhaps wedded to the engineering industries, with a slight bias on precision engineering. . . .

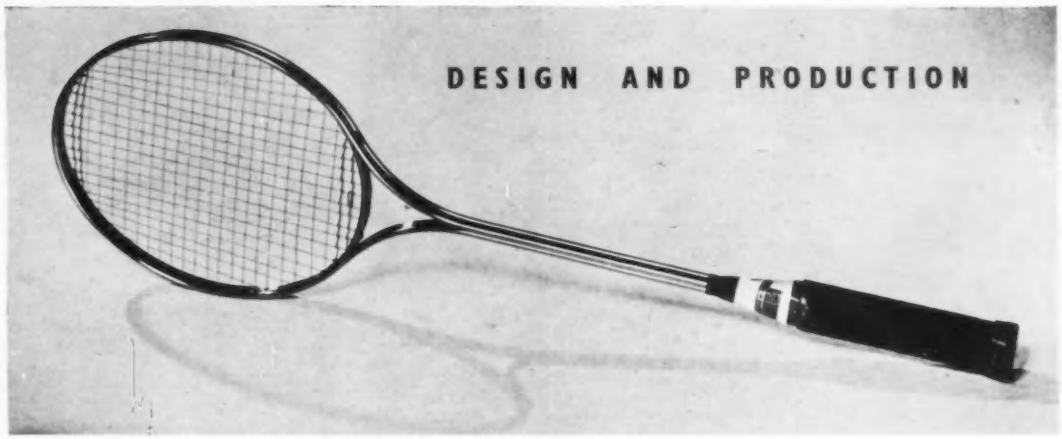
H. E. Z. GORDON

London W1

• DESIGN's aim is to give news of developments in design, irrespective of the industry in which they occur. While we hope to strike a balance between the decorative and the utilitarian, if we sometimes devote more space to the engineering industries—using the term in its broadest sense—than to the decorative-art industries, it is because the importance of design is generally admitted in the latter group (even though opinions on what is *good* design may differ); whereas the former group is only now becoming aware of the value of good appearance in its products. But we hope that pp 11, 12, 18 in this issue will convince Mr Fishwick and other textile-trade readers that we have not forgotten their interests.—EDITOR.

TWO NEW BOOKS

Houses by Lionel Brett and *Pottery & Glass* by Bernard Hollowood are two new titles in the "Things we see" series of books (published by Penguin at 2*s* 6*d* each). One of the many illustrations in *Pottery & Glass* is this photograph of lustre-decorated ware by A. E. Gray & Co Ltd.



Stainless steel frame is bonded to wooden handle in this badminton racket by Samuel Fox & Co Ltd—a technique which makes it unnecessary to press the racket after play

Bonding wood and metal

Techniques first developed in the aircraft industry are capable of wide application in other fields

ONE OF THE most important industrial advances of the recent past has been the development of plastic adhesives. The woodworking industry, particularly in the field of plywood and veneering, has been drastically affected by these new materials; the widened use of plywood is due to improvements, both in production and in the product, which have been facilitated by synthetic resins.

Plastic adhesives have also been able to solve another problem. Many efforts were made in the past to develop an adhesive for metals and other non-porous substances, which would, it was realised, be a significant contribution to technical progress; the conventional methods of joining metals — especially light metals—all have characteristic disadvantages. Considerable interest was therefore aroused when it was announced in 1942 that, as a result of investigations into the theoretical background of adhesion, Dr N. A. de Bruyne, of Aero Research Ltd, had developed a patented process for bonding metals, which is known as the 'Redux' process.

The Redux process has been widely used in aircraft construction, and indeed its use in this field is increasing. But it has many other interesting applications, which include:

Bonding two different thicknesses of aluminium together, as in the combined sink and draining-board made by Rubery Owen Ltd.

In the Gomme ski, used by the British team in the recent Olympic Games, a birch veneer running-surface is Redux-bonded to a stainless steel strip, and that in turn is bonded to the upper structure—a laminate of plastic and wood.

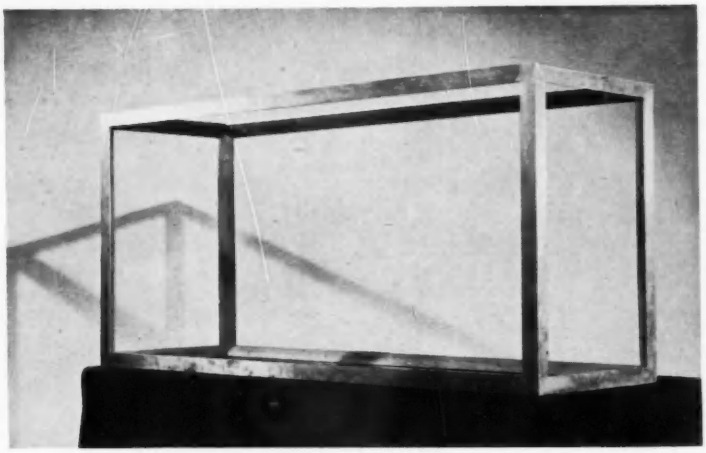
Aluminium window-frames and show-cases are fastened together by metal angle-pieces at the corners and bonded with Redux by means of clamps containing electric heating elements.

Redux is also the bond used by Venesta Ltd in their product, Vendura (DESIGN, January, p. 21).

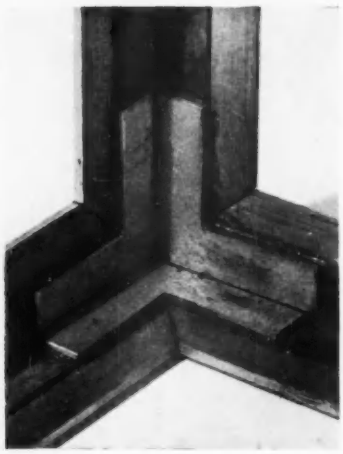
Redux is produced as two components—a clear viscous liquid and a stable white powder. For effective use the following three points are of major importance: the metal surfaces to be joined must be thoroughly cleaned and degreased; the surfaces must be clamped together under pressure after the application of the adhesive; and the glue-line must be heated to a temperature between 140° and 180° C.

After the removal of any corrosion from the surfaces of the metals, and after degreasing—the conventional trichlorethylene bath is suitable—Redux liquid is applied by brush, spray, or roller to both surfaces. Next, the powder is applied—either by sifting on to the wet surfaces or by dipping the metal into a tray containing powder. An appropriate period is then allowed for air-drying; five minutes is sufficient for small surfaces, but on the other hand, periods of twenty-four hours or more will not impair the ultimate strength of the joint.

The joint, when thus air-dried, is clamped together and placed in an oven to "cure" the resin bond. This takes 15 minutes at a temperature of 145° C; greater heat may be used for speedier production—a temperature of 180° C, for example, gives a curing time of 4 minutes. Correctly cured resin, giving maximum joint strength, is a dark reddish-brown in colour; a



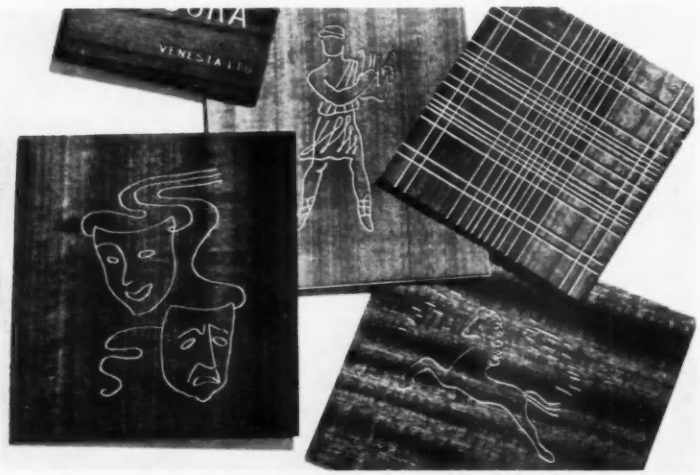
Showcase made from aluminium extrusions Redux-bonded to wood and subsequently assembled by the use of a cold-setting gap-filling glue (Aerolite 300)



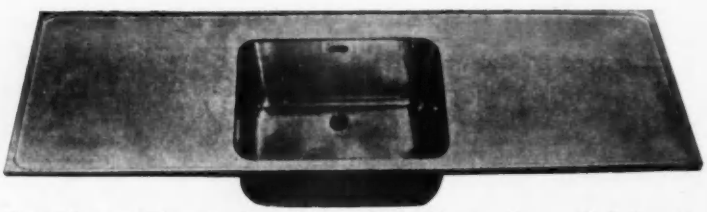
Detail of case shows veneers bonded to aluminium. L-shaped pieces also veneered

light colour indicates under-curing, and a darker colour over-curing. It is easy to see whether sufficient clamping pressure has been exercised, for this should be enough to squeeze out a little of the adhesive from the edges of the joint.

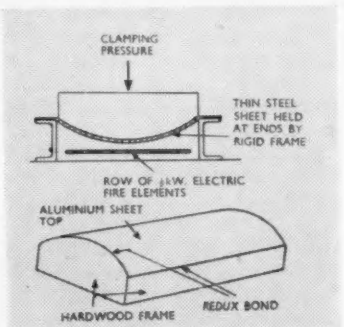
The examples quoted above and illustrated here, varied though they are, suggest that the potential usefulness of the Redux process is not yet fully realised, at any rate among designers and makers of consumer goods. Aero Research Ltd do not claim that it will supersede conventional methods of joining metals; what they *do* claim is that it has a definite part to play in production, since it is readily adaptable to modern techniques and can facilitate new and cleaner designs, especially where wood and metal are used together. Moreover, it avoids some of the disadvantages encountered with riveting and welding, which will be familiar to all who have used these processes. *B. R. D.*



Vendura *panels (wood veneered to aluminium) with patterns formed by exposing the metal sheet. Nameplate,* top left, *engraved with normal pantograph-type machine: straight-line pattern,* top right, *obtained with a hand scraper: other designs (in original about* 8 *in.* × 10 *in. each) prepared free-hand, using a router*



Two different thicknesses of aluminium are bonded together in the Rubery Owen sink and draining board above.


CLAMPING PRESSURE
THIN STEEL SHEET HELD AT ENDS BY RIGID FRAME
ROW OF ½kW. ELECTRIC FIRE ELEMENTS
ALUMINIUM SHEET TOP
HARDWOOD FRAME
REDUX BOND

Frame and top are clamped upside-down on a thin steel sheet, the temperature of which is maintained at 190° C by radiant heating elements

Right: *diagram shows method of production of Ewbank carpet sweeper by Entwistle & Kenyon Ltd, Accrington*

Notebook

Design and the retailer

WHAT THE RETAILER can do to influence public demand towards well-designed goods; how to employ discussion methods when considering design; whether design appreciation should be included in retail staff training courses—these were some of the many questions discussed at a recent three-day residential conference organised by the Council of Industrial Design for Midland store executives.

This first experimental conference on Design for the Retail Trade was attended by managerial staff, senior buyers and staff training officers from twelve stores in Birmingham, Coventry and Leamington. The interest shown in it suggests that further meetings of retailers and designers might well be organised in other centres, with similar conferences for specialised groups in the retail trade, from top management to salespeople. The Council will announce its programme in due course.

Vogue scholarship from RCA

GROWING RECOGNITION OF the professional status of fashion designing is evident from the news that the magazine *Vogue* has given the newly formed school of Fashion Design at the Royal College of Art a scholarship of £150, for one of the three most successful students—with a guarantee of six months' employment on *Vogue*. This will take effect after the completion of the first three years' course in 1951.

People in the news

CHANGES IN THE membership of the Council of Industrial Design and its Scottish Committee were announced recently. New members of the Council are Mr John Gloag, Hon. ARIBA, and Mr H. V. Lobb, FRIBA. Sir Francis Meynell, Sir Steven Bilsland, the Hon. Josiah Wedgwood and Mr W. Haigh are no longer members of the Council. Sir Steven was chairman of the Scottish Committee, and his place has been taken by Mr R. A. Maclean. . . .

Sir Charles Tennyson, CMG, has retired from the chairmanship of the FBI Industrial Art Committee. He had been chairman since its inception in 1920, and is succeeded by Mr Ernest W. Goodale, CBE, MC. Mr Goodale is a member of the FBI Grand Council and of the Council of Industrial Design. . . .

Mr Milner Gray, RDI, president of the Society of Industrial Artists, left Britain at the end of February for a six weeks' lecture tour arranged by the British Council in Australia and New Zealand.

American viewpoints

A SHEAF OF pamphlets from the USA gives some indication of the outlook and activities of the Society of Industrial Designers—a body which it would be fair to describe as the nearest equivalent, in America, of the Society of Industrial Artists in Britain, though the SID differs from the SIA in that it has no commercial designers' section, and that it does not admit as members "designers who specialise in a single type of product."

An SID bulletin on training lays down that the industrial designer must be an artist, an engineer and a merchandising expert: throughout its publications, there is more emphasis on a knowledge of marketing methods than is common among the Doctors of Design (the phrase is Anthony Bertram's) in this country. The following passage may provoke some thought: "Even many persons who are most outspoken in condemning the old applied-art attitude seem to lack full appreciation of the difference between industrial design as a profession serving manufacturers, and industrial art, the application of aesthetic standards and principles to manufacturing problems. Every industrial designer must be an expert in industrial art, but he can scarcely claim the title *industrial designer* unless he transcends the industrial art attitude."

Difference of opinion

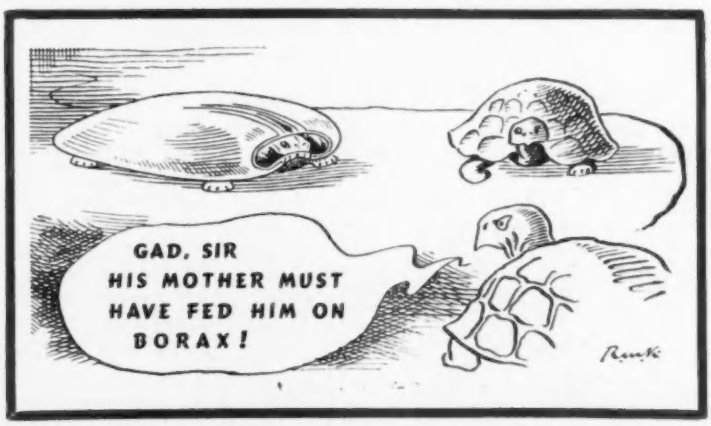
IN AMERICA ALSO a panel of housewives, asked to state which of two package designs they preferred, chose the more ornate design by a considerable majority. When told, however, that they could have either as a gift, 75 per cent chose the simpler one. Moral of this story seems to be that an elaborately decorated product may make a woman pause to admire, but it often takes a simpler product to make her stop and buy.

About Ascot sales

THE MAKERS OF the Ascot gas water-heater notify us of an error in the figures for Ascot sales quoted in DESIGN, February, p. 9. The sales in 1946 totalled 155,000 heaters, and in 1947 (despite Purchase Tax), 148,000.

Streamlining—true and false

IN JANUARY'S ISSUE OF DESIGN (No. 1, p. 17) the figures 16·55 horsepower and 9·62 horsepower were quoted as the power required to propel a Mercédès-Benz saloon car at 62 m.p.h., respectively before and after certain modifications which we described. In the interests of accuracy we must now point out that the figures did *not* give the total power required to propel the car, but only that part of the total used *in overcoming air-resistance* at the given speed. The saving in power was, therefore, 41·8 per cent of this



A definition—from the Architectural Review, *December 1948: ". . . the system of styling for industry known as streamlining (or now, more appropriately, as borax)"*

component only, not 41·8 per cent of the total.

This correction does not, of course, invalidate the point originally made—that the fitting of a smooth undershield effected a greater improvement than any of the streamlining modifications to the visible parts of the body.

New products . . .

WHILE LONDON TRANSPORT was experimenting with its double-deck Green Line coach (pp. 16–17), British Railways were evolving a double-deck railway carriage. Also experimental, this is intended for the crowded suburban services of South London. . . .

The pit-head winding gear, most familiar landmark of a coal-mining district, will be unseen in the new Rothes Colliery, Fifeshire, a model of which was displayed recently. Here the gear will be enclosed in concrete towers above the shafts. . . .

From Allis-Chalmers of Southampton comes news of a tractor plough made by their American associates, in which the engine is behind the driver and the plough rigidly mounted in front. The driver can watch his work without having to turn round. . . .

Ekco's new *Consort* radio set has its controls at the ends, instead of the front. Its two-colour plastic cabinet was styled by J. K. White, MA.

. . . and new packs

ALONG WITH OTHER representatives of the trade and technical press, we were lately invited to the Savoy to be introduced to a new disinfectant. This is the first time we have been invited to the Savoy to be introduced to a new disinfectant; we illustrate here its outward and visible form.

Printed in red, black and green, Zal's *label has a family resemblance to items in the related* Izal *range*

Zal is a companion line for *Izal*, using the same stopper, the same shape of bottle (made in glass of a lighter colour), and a label which bears a family resemblance. The design was evolved, in conjunction with the manufacturers, Newton, Chambers & Co Ltd, by their advertising agents, Pritchard Wood & Partners. *Zal* is being marketed first in the Midland area. . . .

A new pack for the Tek toothbrush consists of a cylinder of rigid transparent plastic, ribbed for strength and with a slip-on cap, forming a container which will be especially useful when travelling. It is made by De La Rue Extrusions Ltd at their Tynemouth factory.

Exhibitions to come

POST-WAR REVIVAL of the *Sunday Times* National Book Exhibition is due to take place at Grosvenor House, Park Lane, from 31 October to 14 November this year. Though not specifically an exhibition of design, this show in pre-war years devoted considerable attention to, and stimulated public interest in, book design.

Another exhibition to be held for the first time since the war is the Advertising & Marketing Exhibition, to be staged at Olympia from 6 to 10 February 1950. James Gardner, OBE, RDI, will be chief designer of this exhibition.

Winning and commended designs from the Industrial Art Bursaries Competition, 1948, will be shown at the Royal Society of Arts, 12 March to 2 April. Awards were made in all six sections but the Bursaries Board were "disappointed by the small number of entries in some sections . . . , and notice that no candidates at all came forward from many of the major art schools."

An exhibition entitled *Art for All —Painting for London's Transport* 1908–49, to be held at the Victoria & Albert Museum for three months, starting 6 April, will display London Transport posters side by side with the original paintings and drawings on which they are based.

At this year's BIF, examples of the work of members of the Midland Industrial Designers' Association will be shown on the stand of Birmingham Chamber of Commerce.

Tailpiece

"SIGNS AND NAME-PLATES. Ensure they are worthy of your farm, country home, studio or business premises. Carried out in wrought iron or beautifully grained wood. Original rough sketches prepared and submitted free. Also Sussex Potpourri in transparent boxes. . . ." —Advertisement in *The Countryman*.

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ADVERTISEMENTS

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNER requires assistants, also presentation artists. Please write to:—Design Industries, Beckenham, Kent.

'SYLVIA' PATTERNED PAPERS, by eminent designers, are the latest decorative papers for book and box coverings and for all Display Purposes. Special designs undertaken. E. Mason, 62 Belvoir Drive, Leicester.

'SELLING THROUGH DISPLAY,' a 32-page book intended mainly for the smaller shopkeeper but of interest also to consumer-goods manufacturers, is obtainable (1*s* 3*d* post free) from HM Stationery Office *or* Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, SW1.

THE ACID TEST

Sulphuric acid is so widely used in Industry that it is commonly taken as an index to the state of trade. The acid is used as it is produced and therefore the chart of its consumption reflects the fluctuations of business quickly and closely. Acids, with their opposites, the alkalis, are both in volume and range of uses the most important direct contribution of the chemical industry to Production. There is scarcely a commodity, scarcely even a single article which can be made without either acids or alkalis entering at one or more stages of its manufacture. Sulphuric acid is used in almost every industry. The modern method of producing the acid from iron pyrites, air and water was suggested in 1831 by Peregrine Phillips, a Bristol vinegar brewer. The other essential " heavy acids " are nitric and hydrochloric. Tens of thousands of tons of nitric acid, once known as " aqua fortis " or " strong water ", are produced by the British chemical industry every year. It forms the basis of nearly all explosives, as well as of the inorganic fertilizers which are today required in increasing quantities to grow more food. Hydrochloric acid, or spirit of salt, is a combination of hydrogen with chlorine and finds wide uses in the metal pickling, tanning and textile trades. The heavy acids are in one sense the manufactured products of the chemical industry. In the much wider sense they are essential raw materials without constant and adequate supplies of which the wheels of production would stop turning. The British chemical industry is the largest manufacturer of heavy acids in the world.

ICI

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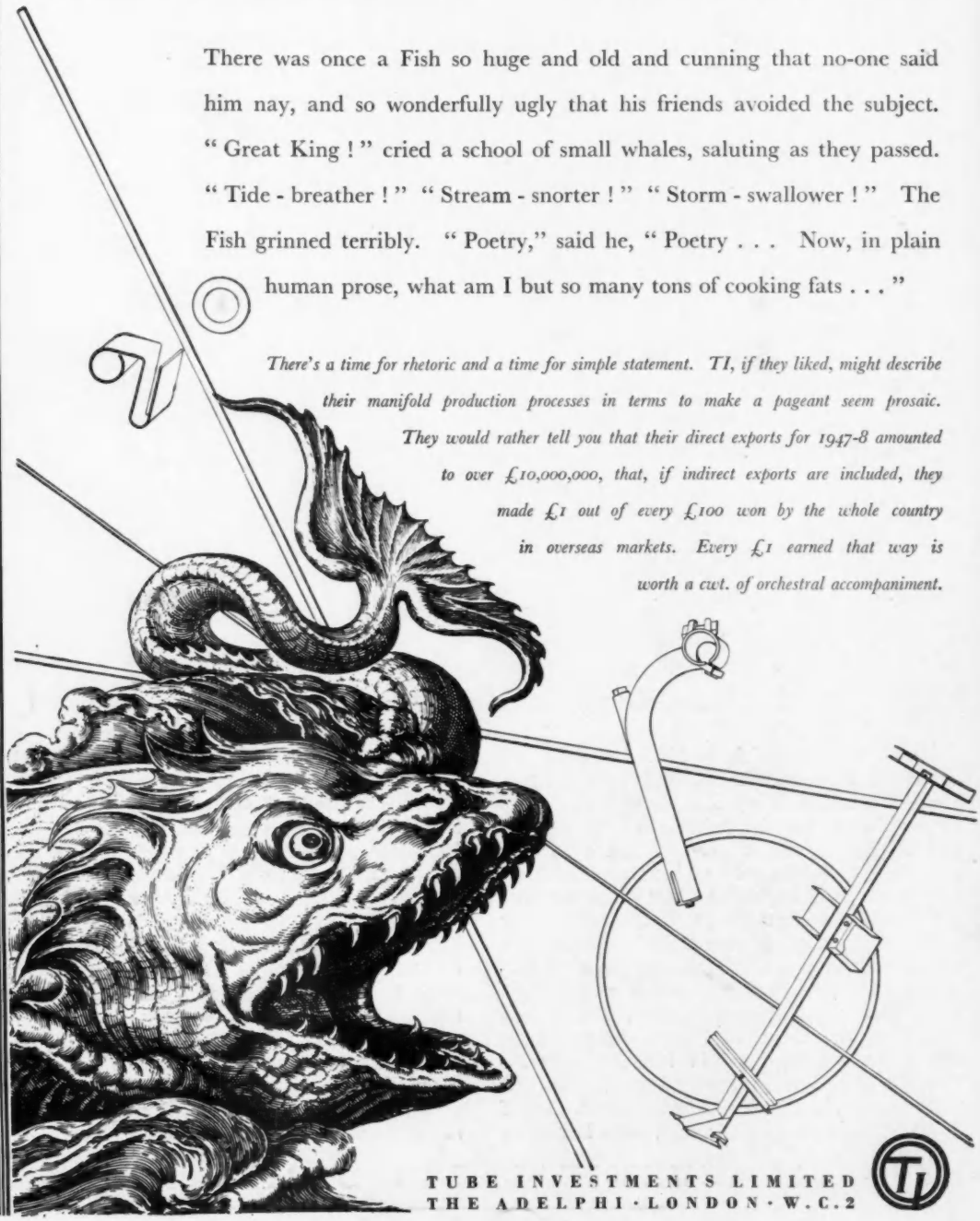
The fable of the fish and the facts

There was once a Fish so huge and old and cunning that no-one said him nay, and so wonderfully ugly that his friends avoided the subject. " Great King ! " cried a school of small whales, saluting as they passed. " Tide - breather ! " " Stream - snorter ! " " Storm - swallower ! " The Fish grinned terribly. " Poetry," said he, " Poetry . . . Now, in plain human prose, what am I but so many tons of cooking fats . . . "

There's a time for rhetoric and a time for simple statement. TI, if they liked, might describe their manifold production processes in terms to make a pageant seem prosaic. They would rather tell you that their direct exports for 1947-8 amounted to over £10,000,000, that, if indirect exports are included, they made £1 out of every £100 won by the whole country in overseas markets. Every £1 earned that way is worth a cwt. of orchestral accompaniment.



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DESIGN is published for the Council of Industrial Design, Tilbury House, Petty France, London SW 1 (Scottish Committee: 95 Bothwell Street, Glasgow C 2) by His Majesty's Stationery Office, and printed in Great Britain by Benham and Company Limited, Colchester.

S.O. Code No. 88-1266-3-49.*